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Newsletter

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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USDA SELECTS AREAS TO STUDY IMPACT OF SPECIAL EFFORTS IN DEVELOPMENT

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Non-urban areas in five States have been selected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to test the effects of a concentration of program efforts in rural development.

The States are South Carolina, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Oregon and Ohio.

Though no new grant or loan funds are being provided for use in the pilot areas, Department agencies will apply special efforts in them.

"The success of the program," Henry L. Ahlgren, Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development, explained, "will depend upon the extent of interagency cooperation that can be generated by the State Rural Development Committees."



After a reasonable test period, Dr. Ahlgren explained, the Department will compare accomplishments in the pilot areas with those of other specific areas in which traditional programming took place. Individual states might very well generate the same kind of interagency coordination and concentration of effort, he said, the only difference being that USDA will be carefully monitoring and evaluating the efforts in the areas it has selected.

Specifically, within the areas to receive special effort:

1. The Farmers Home Administration will assist in financing housing, water, and waste disposal systems.
2. The Extension Service, in addition to financial support for an area community development agent, will assure the support of county, area, and State staff.

3. The Forest Service will provide additional financing in South Carolina, Wisconsin and Oregon through the State Forester for planning and developmental services on matters relating to forest resources.
4. The Soil Conservation Service will provide soil surveys with interpretations, soil and water inventory information with recommendations, and appropriate resource planning inputs.
5. Farmer Cooperative Service will furnish technical assistance on the organization and operation of cooperatives.
6. The Rural Electrification Administration, in addition to making loans to improve and expand electric and telephone service to meet growing demands in rural areas, will assist its borrowers and their associations in carrying out local development projects.
7. The Economic Research Service will provide benchmark material useful in developing techniques for measuring progress.
8. Other agencies of USDA will continue to support the pilot projects, through their normal programs.

Dr. Ahlgren noted, too, that other agencies of the Federal and State Government would be encouraged by USDA to support programs developed by State Rural Development Committees.

PLANNERS, USDA EMPLOYEES
CONFER IN VIRGINIA, MISSOURI

Two chapters of the American Institute of Planners and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently co-sponsored meetings on the use of USDA information in the comprehensive planning process and how to more effectively involve citizens in the planning process.

The meetings were held in Charlottesville, Virginia, and in St. Louis and Fulton, Missouri.

In Charlottesville, more than 75 planners and USDA employees met. Representatives of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Extension Service, Farmers Home Administration, Soil Conservation Service, Rural Electrification Administration and Forest Service discussed the availability and applicability of information developed by these agencies to the planning process.

AIP reacted: "The scale, diversity and relevance to development problems of these programs was an eyeopener to some planners. At the same time, the planning processes described by planners shed light on its importance to rural community development programs administered by the agriculturalists."

Other such meetings are under consideration at the local level.

BIG CITY SHARE REMAINS STEADY

The 1970 census shows that 27.6 percent of the U.S. population lives in cities of 100,000 or more compared with 28.3 percent in 1960.

GEORGIA OPENS RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Georgia has opened a rural development center at Tifton designed to focus the whole range of university and Extension resources on rural development.

With a new 24,000-square-foot administration building dedicated in April and an irrigation exposition already under its belt, the center will be the rural counterpart of the State's Urban Life Center located in Atlanta, bringing to bear on rural development such varied university disciplines as industrial development (from Georgia Tech), marketing (from Georgia State), medicine, manpower training and agricultural research.

Its director, Dr. S. E. Younts, said the center will be drawing upon talent from 27 different campuses.

Functioning largely as a coordination unit, the center will complement and expand upon the existing programs of the Coastal Plain Experiment Station, the Cooperative Extension Service, the College of Agriculture of the University of Georgia and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

A thousand farmers attended last year's Irrigation Exposition at the center. Another is planned for July 7-8 this year. Also planned are soybean and swine expositions.

Among non-agricultural events at the Center was a conference focusing on community development for town and country ministers held this spring.

A rural development colloquium, "Directions for Action," was scheduled for this June. It is being sponsored by the Center, the Georgia State Rural Development Committee and the Coastal Plains Regional Commission.

COLORADO BUSINESSMEN SET UP MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

A method that proved helpful to farmers in managing their farms more effectively is being given a trial run with businessmen in Northeast Colorado. Small businessmen in five small communities were so impressed with results of farm management associations that they set up a similar organization.

In a farm management association, a group of farmers hires an expert to help them set up a record-keeping system fitted to individual needs. After analyses, the expert shows the individual member his management strengths and weaknesses and how they compare with those of the other members.

A trade survey by the Small Business Administration in cooperation with Colorado State University a few years ago showed the businessmen of Northeast Colorado some of their problem areas. In 1967, the businessmen asked for assistance in such fields as management practice, record-keeping systems and tax planning. With financial assistance from the Cooperative Extension Service and technical help from SBA, 20 businessmen agreed to pay dues and a management consultant was hired.

Results from this **pilot** project, not yet available, are expected to help guide businessmen in other small communities across the nation.



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REGIONAL PLANNING MOVES AHEAD IN MISSOURI

With the State divided into 20 planning regions, Missouri is moving ahead on several fronts in regional planning and development:

- * Four regions across the southern part of the State qualify for and are using Economic Development Act funds to help staff and operate their planning programs.
- * Almost every region has begun or completed a sewer and water study through financing and aid received from the Farmers Home Administration of the Department of Agriculture.
- * All regions are acting as coordinators and reviewers under the A-95 directive of the Bureau of the Budget. (Under A-95, the regional planning commission must review local requests for federal aid, and any conflict or duplication can be noted at the regional level).
- * The University of Missouri's university-wide extension service has reorganized its field extension offices and personnel to correspond to regional planning areas.
- * Comprehensive health planning has begun in three regions--St. Louis, Northeast, and Kansas City.
- * Almost all regions have an executive director and some staff.
- * Law enforcement programs have been funded and are organized in areas representing 85% of the population.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture State Rural Development Committee is working close with the State Department of community affairs on implementing the planning district programs in the State.